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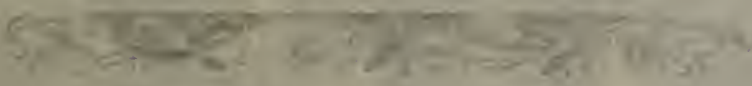
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A KING AND HIS BROTHER

(Otto the Great Triumphs Over His Dead Brother Thankmar)

From the painting by the contemporary German artist, Albert Baur

HENRY THE FOWLER left a strong and united kingdom to be inherited by his son, Otto I; and men seeing the splendor of Otto's rule have conferred upon him a title which belonged far more rightfully to his father. He is called Otto the Great. But whereas Henry had won all men to love and aid him by his kindness and his wisdom, Otto by his arrogance estranged the hearts of his subjects. His coronation was a sumptuous affair. Henry had refused even to be clothed in robes of state; Otto had the four chief nobles of his kingdom act as servants at his installation. The Duke of Franconia and his followers, the very nobles who had offered the crown to Henry, were soon in open rebellion against Otto. In punishment for a slight offense he had compelled them to come before him submissively each carrying a cur dog in his arms. Their haughty spirits burned to avenge the indignity.

The revolt was headed by Otto's own half-brother Thankmar, who, when the rebels were defeated, took refuge in a church. Such sanctuaries were regarded as inviolable; but by Otto's command Thankmar was attacked at the very foot of the altar, and was slain after a desperate conflict.

Otto, in his haughtiness, desired subjects not friends. He revived the "Holy Roman Empire" of Charlemagne, which had been forgotten in the days of misery. Journeying across the Alps to Rome Otto had himself crowned as Emperor by the Pope, with gorgeous ceremonies.







A CHRISTMAS RECONCILIATION

(Otto's Younger Brother Henry Comes to Him for Mercy)

From the noted historical series by Alexander Zick

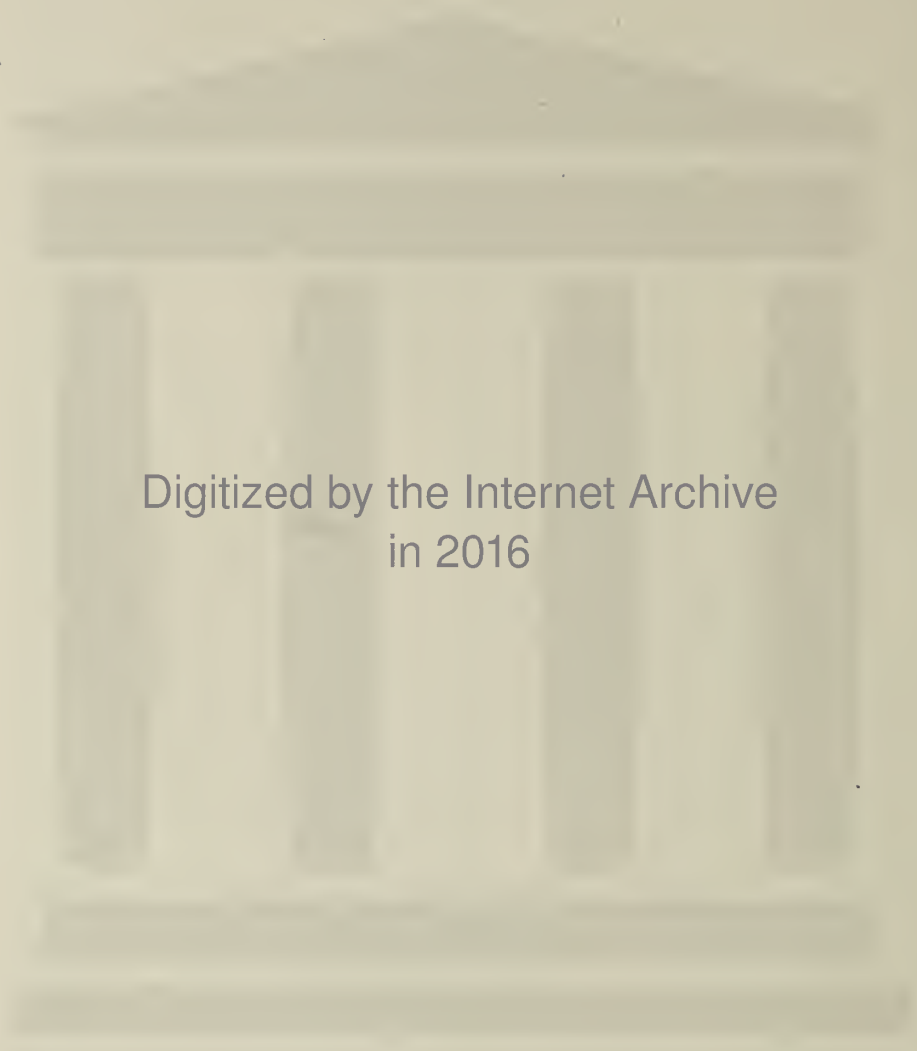
OTTO THE GREAT had another brother beside Thankmar, a mere lad named Henry. Henry was also driven into rebellion, twice patched up a peace, and twice broke out afresh. The third time he plotted to murder his brother and was thrown into prison. Estaping, he came before Otto in the midst of the Christmas services in Frankfort cathedral, and garbed as an outcast and stranger, he cast himself at his brother's feet entreating mercy. Otto recognized him and pardoned him once more, and from that time Henry became the Emperor's strongest and most loyal supporter. He was made Duke of Bavaria, and his descendants afterward became emperors of Germany.

With Henry's help, Otto firmly established his supremacy over Germany and then over Italy. They had next to meet renewed assaults from the Huns, whom they defeated in a great battle in 955 and broke their power forever. Henry and his Bavarians occupied much of the land which the Huns had previously captured, and the German race and power was thus extended into the land which we call Austria to-day. The Hunnish kingdom was restricted within the bounds of modern Hungary.

Thus Henry repaid his brother's leniency, and extended German power farther south and east than it had ever reached before.







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OTTO, THE "WONDER-CHILD"

(His Followers Fight Their Way Out of Italy with the Lad's Body)

From the painting by Prof. H. Rustige, of Germany

GERMANY was now once more a powerful and fairly peaceful kingdom, secured equally against the sudden raids of the Huns and the slow, persistent invasion of the Slavs. Unfortunately in reviving the forms of the "Holy Roman Empire," Otto the Great had involved both himself and his country in an endless strife in Italy. The German Emperors were forever disagreeing with the Roman Popes, and one German army after another made the futile march across the Alps only to come back, if ever it came back at all, depleted in numbers and desolated by fevers. The son of Otto the Great was Otto II, and he in his vanity as "Holy Roman Emperor," wedded a princess of the Greek "Roman Empire of the East," which still existed at Constantinople. Their son, Otto III, became Emperor of Germany as a mere child. His Greek mother had taught him to despise everything German and he used to sign himself "Greek by birth, Roman by right of rule." Nevertheless, his Greek airs and graces and childish elegances so caught the admiration of the ruder Germans that they called him the "wonder-child."

This fantastic young emperor scarcely ever visited Germany. He devoted himself to the government of Italy, setting up and deposing Popes in opposition to the will of the Italians, until the people barred him out of Rome. He laid siege to it, but died, probably of poison. So enraged had the Italians become against his ill-advised interferences that his devoted followers had to fight their way back to Germany bearing the dead emperor's body.







THE TRIAL BY ORDEAL

(The Empress Cunegunde to Establish Her Innocence Walks Over Hot Ploughshares)

By the contemporary German artist, Carl Weigand

IN the days of Otto the wonder-child, the influence of the Christian church had become very powerful indeed in Germany. There was a widespread idea that the world was to come to an end in the year 1000. So as the dread year approached people began to be very religious and to think much more of the next world than of this. Many people became priests or nuns, and timid folk schemed to buy salvation by giving all their wealth to the church. Splendid cathedrals were built with this money; great abbeys arose, tenanted by thousands of monks; and it is figured that probably half the land and wealth of Germany passed into the possession of the Church. Even the fact that the old world continued its existence beyond the year 1000 did not wholly check the religious fervor; the end was still felt to be near. The Emperor Henry II, who succeeded the wonder-child, was as religious as young Otto had been. Henry's wife Cunegunde, having been accused of sin, she offered to undergo an "ordeal," that is, she was to walk barefoot along a path made up of red hot iron plough-blades. It is difficult to say where religion divides from supersitition; but the idea of the ordeal was that if she were innocent, God would prevent the plough-blades from burning her.

However we choose to account for the fact, the Empress passed through the ordeal without injury, and she and Henry were both happy, and confirmed in their faith.







THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

(Emperor and Pope Unite in Consecrating the Cathedral of Bamberg)

From the painting by the contemporary German artist, H. Prell

THIS Henry II, who had shown his religious faith by submitting his wife to the ordeal, ruled Germany from 1002 to 1024. Through all his reign he devoted himself to affairs of religion, chiefly to church-building, and the main boast and achievement of his life was the completion of the great cathedral of Bamberg. The building was opened with great ceremonies in the year 1020. The Pope himself crossed the Alps into Germany to take part in its installation. Unfortunately while the Pope was in Germany he succeeded in convincing Henry that it was the emperor's religious duty to drive all the Pope's enemies out of Italy. So again a German army crossed the Alps.

The enemies of the Pope at that moment happened to be the Greeks, who had seized most of southern Italy. Henry defeated and expelled them, thereby leaving the land almost empty and an easy conquest for the ravaging Normans, who seized it next. Henry's own army was devastated by a pestilence and he returned almost alone to Germany. Rumor has it that he had secretly become a monk. He was certainly a good and pious man, but an unwise king. After his death he was canonized as Saint Henry.







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The University of Chicago Press is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Illinois. It is a member of the Association of American Universities and the Association of Research Libraries. The Press is committed to the highest standards of scholarship and to the dissemination of knowledge. It publishes a wide range of books and journals in the fields of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The Press also provides a variety of services to its authors and readers, including proofreading, editing, and distribution. The Press is proud to be a part of the University of Chicago and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and learning.





GERMANY'S ROBIN HOOD

(The Outlawed Duke Ernest Slain by the Peasantry)

Drawn from an illumination in an old German manuscript

UNDER the next emperor, Conrad II, occurred the career of Germany's "Robin Hood," the noted outlaw Ernest of Swabia. He was certainly an outlaw of highest rank, being the Duke of Swabia and the stepson of the Emperor. But the young duke wanted to be a king, so he claimed and attempted to seize the crown of Burgundy. He was defeated and imprisoned, but was released at the prayer of his mother, the Empress. Conrad even offered to restore the youth to his dukedom, if he would capture and give over to punishment his partner in rebellion, Count Werner of Kyberg.

Young Ernest, however, was loyal to Werner and instead of betraying him fled to join him in the forests. Here the two gathered a band and lived as outlaws, plundering the rich. The neighboring peasantry, admiring the heroism and devotion of the young men, sheltered them for years. At length, however, the enforced contributions palled upon the neighborhood, and a company of the peasants assailed and slew the outlaws after a desperate fight.

One form of the legend asserts that the assailants were really troops of the emperor sent to seize Count Werner, and that they slew Duke Ernest only by mistake.







THE TWO HENRYS

(Henry III. of Germany Challenges King Henry of France to a Duel)

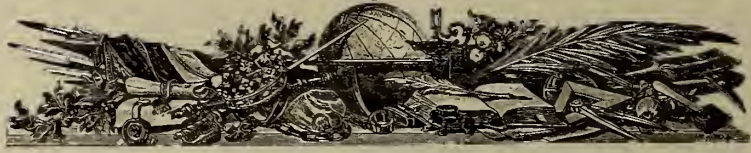
From a painting by the contemporary German artist, Fritz Roeber

HENRY III, one of Germany's very greatest and noblest rulers, came to the throne in the middle of this eleventh century. Henry sought to establish peace and order throughout the world. He raised his position as Emperor so high that it was accepted as meaning not merely the ruler of Germany but of all western Europe. His authority became acknowledged as extending over the kings of other lands. The Kings of Lombardy and Sicily in Italy, of Bohemia and Hungary in the east, of France and England in the west all bowed before Henry, not paying him tribute, but recognizing his superior authority and higher rank. Even the Roman Popes submitted to Henry's political power and wisdom. He deposed an evil Pope and named a successor. Indeed, during a reign of less than twenty years, Henry appointed four Popes of his own choosing.

Our illustration shows a characteristic incident of his strength and energy. During his absence in Italy, King Henry I, of France, had taken possession of some frontier territory. The Emperor invited him to a meeting that they might discuss pacifically their rights to the land in question. But the French Henry so angered him with evasions and subterfuges of argument, that the Emperor sprang to his feet and defied the King to a personal combat, casting his glove upon the ground in challenge. The King evaded that issue also, and the same night fled back to France in secret, abandoning all claim to the disputed land.







THE BEGINNING OF THE PAPAL STRUGGLE
(The Young Emperor Henry IV. Vows to Drag Pope Gregory from His Throne)
As staged at the Berlin Theatre in the play by E. von Wildenbruch

ALMOST all the influence which Henry III had wielded was lost by his weak son Henry IV, whose life presents a most pathetic tragedy of the dangers of high position without an even higher strength. The death of Henry III brought little Henry IV to the imperial throne as a child only six years old. Of course the land was really ruled by his elders, and one party after another schemed to get the boy Henry into their hands so that they might govern in his name. This resulted in such general anarchy that all parties gladly let Henry rule for himself when he was only fifteen. Unfortunately, the evil training he had received from his various masters led him to plunge into a life of dissipation; and soon he was quarreling with all his nobles and his priests.

Meanwhile the very celebrated Gregory VII had become Pope in Rome. He commanded Henry, under threat of expelling him from the faith, to enforce certain church reforms in Germany. The young Emperor received the message, as the dramatist here depicts the scene, in the presence of all his court. He was not unnaturally enraged by this reversal of the positions of Pope and Emperor, justified though he must secretly have known it was. He vowed in fury to do as his father had done and drag this Pope from the Papal throne. He overlooked the fact that his father had been in the right against the other Pope and that now he was in the wrong against Gregory.







HENRY IV UPLIFTS THE CITIES

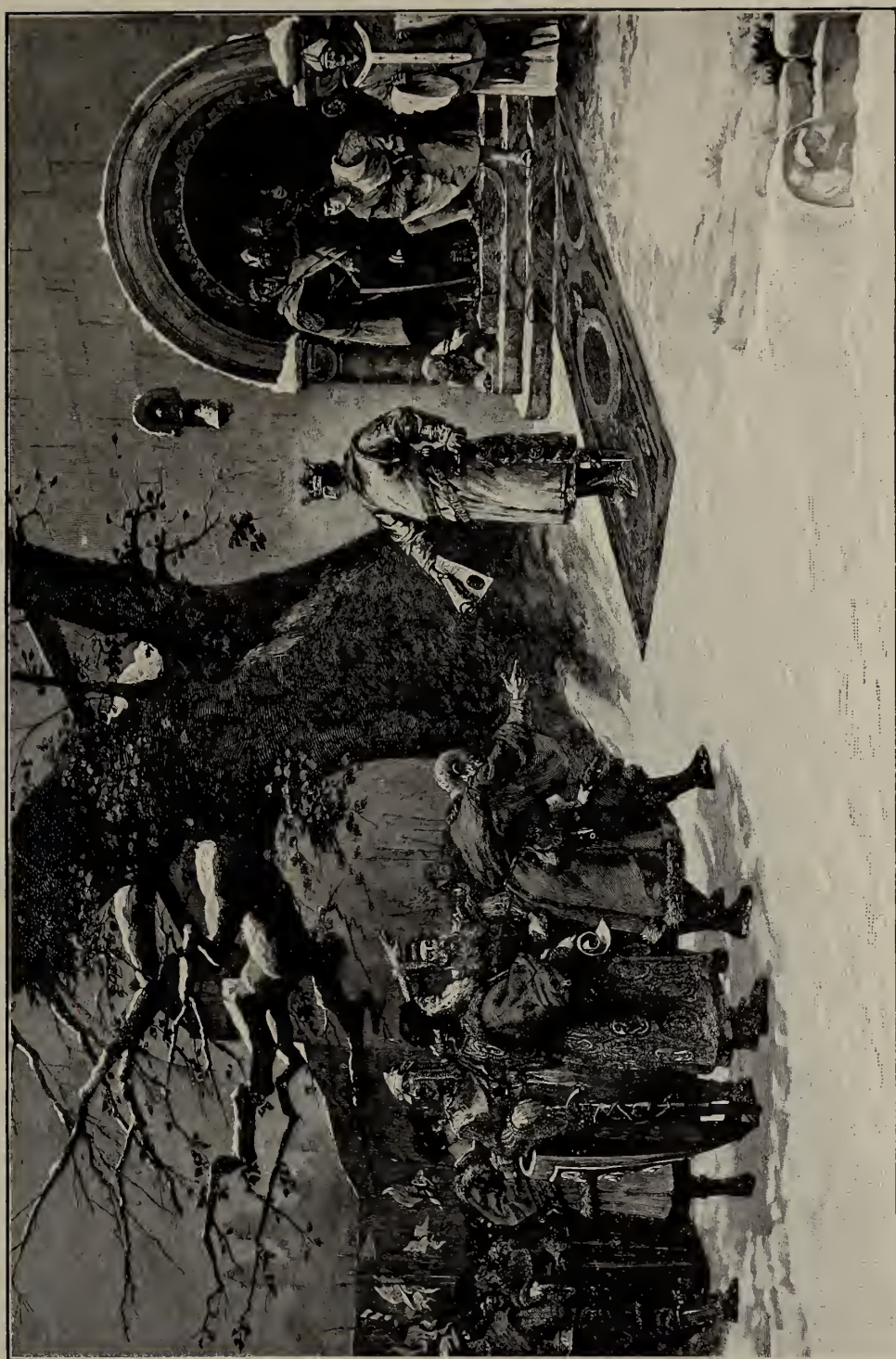
(The Emperor Rewards the Burghers of Worms for Upholding His Cause)

From the German historical series painted by H. Prell

THE first effects of Henry IV's defiance of the Papal power must have surprised him exceedingly. His nobles had long been discontented with his arbitrary rule, and they readily accepted the opportunity for rebellion. They refused to follow a leader who had been cursed by the Church; they even held a meeting in which they threatened to declare Henry deposed, and they invited Pope Gregory to join them in getting rid of their evil ruler. Henry found he could get no army to march against the Pope; and it was then in haste and fear that he took his celebrated winter journey over the Alps to Canossa and entreated Gregory to forgive him. In this way he saved his crown. Then, in no way repentant at heart, but awake to the danger of his position, he set himself to overcome both his nobles and the Pope.

The great contest between the imperial and the papal power which thus began, continued with scarce a pause for two hundred years. The means by which Henry strengthened himself for the struggle was to appeal to the common people of Germany for help against the nobles. It was thus that the great German cities rose to power. Henry IV became, as Henry I had been, their friend and champion. Beginning with Worms, the city which had sheltered him against the nobles, he granted the towns charters and privileges. He encouraged them to strengthen their walls and drill their citizens for war.







BARBAROSSA TAKES UP THE PAPAL QUARREL

(The Pope's Legate Insults the Emperor Barbarossa)

From the painting by the German artist, H. F. Plüddemann

NO other of the mediæval German emperors has so attracted the fancy of the world and become such a figure of legendary fame as the celebrated Frederick I, popularly called Barbarossa or "Red beard." Frederick ruled during the latter half of the twelfth century. A series of feeble emperors, such as Henry IV, had sacrificed most of the power of their high office, until, instead of Emperors naming Popes as Henry III had done, Popes now appointed Emperors. Barbarossa at first obeyed the Pope that he might gather strength in his own land; but the tragical conflict of authority between church and state soon broke forth afresh.

Barbarossa was holding a royal court at Besançon. To it there came ambassadors from almost every land of Europe, all submitting to his imperial authority. Then there came also an Italian cardinal, as envoy from the Pope, and arrogantly delivered his master's orders, declaring that great though Barbarossa might be he was but a vassal to the Pope. So enraged were the German nobles at the cardinal's haughty tone, that one of them, Otto of Wittelsbach, a devoted friend to Barbarossa, would have slain the cardinal on the spot had not the emperor himself interfered. Frederick refused to bow before the Papal dictate—and so the old struggle re-opened.







THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON

By JOHN STOW, Citizen and Habitant of the same. Printed by I. I. at the Sign of the Gun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1618.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON, written by John Stow, Citizen and Habitant of the same, is a most valuable and curious work, which has been often reprinted, and is now in the hands of every reader. The author, who was a native of the city, and lived in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. has given us a most accurate and full account of the city, and its inhabitants, from the time of its first foundation, to the present time. The work is divided into three parts, the first of which contains the history of the city, from the time of its first foundation, to the present time. The second part contains the history of the city, from the time of its first foundation, to the present time. The third part contains the history of the city, from the time of its first foundation, to the present time.





BARBAROSSA KNEELS TO HIS CHIEF VASSAL

(Henry the Lion Refuses to Aid the Emperor in Crushing Italy)

From the painting in the Maximilian Museum at Munich, by the German artist, Phillip Foltz

SIX times did the Emperor Barbarossa lead a German army into Italy against the Popes. Of his struggles there you have already heard in Italy's story. The Italian cities most of them upheld the Pope, and Barbarossa destroyed the chief city of them all, Milan. He also deposed two Popes and set up others. Yet the struggle continued; the imperial armies wasted away. Then began Barbarossa's celebrated quarrel with the most powerful of his subjects, the Duke of Saxony, Henry the Lion.

Henry had been among the most loyal supporters of the Emperor's early reign, having even on one occasion saved Barbarossa's life while they were battling in Rome. But Henry had many friends and allies in Italy; so he wanted all this warfare stopped, and even went on a crusade to the Holy Land to escape taking further part in the strife. His return found Barbarossa sadly in need of men, and the Emperor entreated him for help, even kneeling before him in desperate appeal. When Henry refused his aid, the Emperor's friends and especially the Empress cursed the Saxon Duke bitterly for having broken his allegiance. Barbarossa's little army was completely defeated by the Italian cities, and he himself was supposed to have perished upon the field, but he escaped.







BARBAROSSA'S DREAMS OVER HIS CIEP

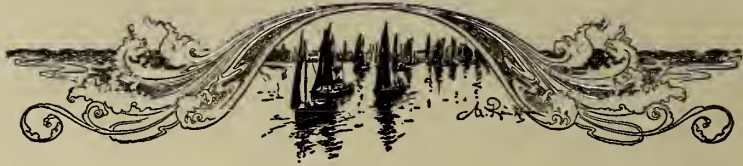
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BARBAROSSA TRIUMPHS OVER HIS CHIEF VASSAL

(Henry the Lion is Overthrown and Begg for Mercy)

From the painting by the Dutch artist, Peter Jannsen

EVEN from this crushing blow the resolute genius of Barbarossa rose again. He made peace with the Pope and the Italian cities and went back to Germany filled with the determination to avènge himself on Henry the Lion and break the power of this overgrown Duke of Saxony. For three years there was civil war between the two great antagonists; and in the end the military strength of the Saxons was completely broken. Henry came and knelt for mercy at the feet of the Emperor, even as that Emperor had previously knelt to him. Barbarossa deprived him of all his estates and exiled him for three years, but ultimately pardoned him and restored a small part of his domains.

This defeat of Henry meant far more than a mere personal victory for Barbarossa; it meant the disappearance of the old Saxon power. Saxony was divided into several smaller principalities, and neither Saxony nor any other duchy was ever allowed again to reach to such size and power. Barbarossa established the imperial principle "divide and reign." After Saxony's downfall he became stronger than any emperor had been before, or ever was to be thereafter. The last years of his reign mark the zenith of the imperial power in Germany. Hence he remains forever in men's minds as the typical figure of imperial splendor.



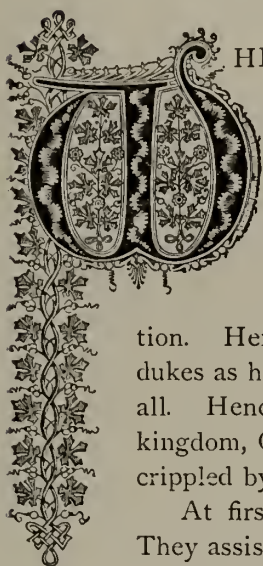




NOBLES ATTACKING MERCHANTS IN "PRIVATE WAR"

Chapter LIII

OTTO THE GREAT AND THE SAXON EMPERORS



WHEN this truly great Henry "the City-Builder" died, so potent had become his influence over the people that without question they chose as his successor, the son whom he had selected. So again a Saxon chief ruled the land.

This son, Otto I. (936-973), possessed his father's resolute strength, but he lacked the ready wit and tact that had helped Henry through many a difficult situation. Henry had treated his nobles as his friends, and the great dukes as his equals. Otto assumed a haughty superiority over them all. Hence where Henry had found loyal supporters and a united kingdom, Otto encountered rebels and rivals, and his rule was long crippled by civil war.

At first, however, the spell of Henry remained over the nobles. They assisted Otto in his gorgeous coronation ceremonies. He was seated on the golden throne of Charlemagne in the cathedral at Aachen. On his head was placed the jewelled crown, in his hand the sacred lance, which was supposed to be the very lance with which Christ had been wounded on the cross, and which is still preserved in the royal treasury of the Austrian empire. The nobles even submitted to Otto's decree that at his coronation feast one duke was to act as his cup-bearer, a second as his carver, a third as his master of horse, and so on. Some of them seemed even to regard such service as an honor, for the offices became hereditary in the various milies. All future coronations were conducted with the same formalities,

and thus the superiority of the king over his lords was positively acknowledged.

But what a storm of troubles this pompous coronation and his further arrogance were brewing for Otto! He was not Henry's oldest son; there was an older half-brother, Thankmar, who had been excluded from the throne in Otto's favor. Thankmar rebelled and was joined by Eberhard, the great duke of the Franks, the same who, twenty years before, had stood by the death-bed of his brother, King Conrad, and waiving personal ambition, had carried the crown to Henry of Saxony.

These two were dangerous foes; but Otto was prompt to attack them before they could unite. He besieged Thankmar in the noted fortress of Eresburg and carried it by assault. Thankmar, a huge and muscular man, finding himself surrounded by enemies, fought his way single-handed to the church within the fortress. He hoped there to find safety, for churches were regarded as sacred. But his foes were relentless, and persisted in their attack until Thankmar, after a desperate struggle, fell dead on the steps of the altar. Otto, who had never loved him, viewed his dead body with grim satisfaction, and then set out to seek the other rebel.

Eberhard had meanwhile drawn into the revolt Otto's younger brother Henry, a mere lad. Twice these two feigned submission, and twice returned to rebellion. The power of Otto was shaken to its foundations. At last Eberhard was slain in an obscure skirmish, and Henry was captured and imprisoned. The next Christmas day Otto was attending divine service at the cathedral in Frankfort. Just as the choir sang "Peace on earth, good-will to men," a man garbed as a penitent pushed his way through the throng and knelt at the king's feet. It was Henry who had escaped from his prison and come to entreat pardon yet a third time. Once more Otto forgave him, and thereafter the younger brother remained a loyal supporter of the king. He was rewarded by being made Duke of Bavaria.

This policy of appointing his own relatives to the various dukedoms, Otto steadily pursued wherever opportunity offered. In this way he managed gradually to consolidate his power. At last there was no one left with strength to rebel, and the king became as secure upon his throne as Henry had been. But Otto held men's bodies by physical force; Henry had controlled their hearts.

As years passed, Otto came to be recognized as by far the most powerful monarch in Europe. He wedded Editha of England, a granddaughter of Alfred the Great. He subdued the Bohemians to the eastward, and, warring against the Danes, marched through their little peninsula from end to end. Standing on its northern shore, he hurled his spear out into the sea, as a token of sover-

eighty even there. He began to think of reducing Italy to subjection and being crowned Emperor at Rome, as the successor of Charlemagne.

At this moment, as if in anticipation of his plans, an appeal came to him from distracted Italy itself. Berengar was the name of the fierce chieftain who for the moment had established himself on the Italian throne. He had slain the former king, and now, to prevent further trouble, he sought to force a marriage between his own son and the young widow of the murdered man. Adelheid, the widowed queen, recoiled in horror from the step; but a woman's feelings were not taken into much account in those wild days. Berengar threw her into prison to compel her to consent. Adelheid escaped, hid in a field of corn while her pursuers galloped past, and then made her way to the castle of Canossa, where she had loyal vassals. There Berengar besieged her.

In her extremity she had sent a letter to Otto, the mightiest king of her world, entreating assistance. The appeal fitted well with Otto's plans. He led an army over the Alps (951), forced Berengar to become his vassal, and rescued the queen from Canossa. He found the lady young and pleasing to his eyes, and, his own wife having died some years before, he married Adelheid at Pavia in the same year.

Through this wedding he succeeded to whatever claims Adelheid possessed to the Italian throne; but further rebellions at home soon withdrew him from pursuit of his Italian plans. He returned north in haste and chastised the offenders. Then came the last Hungarian invasion from which Germany was to suffer. Otto met the barbarians in a long-remembered battle on the river Lech and annihilated their army. The old ballads say that the German king led the attack in person, and that a hundred thousand Magyars were left dead on the field.

Ten years passed before Otto was free to return to Italy. He was growing old; but the influence of his young and beautiful Italian wife was strong upon him. She was eager to see his authority firmly established in her native land, where Berengar was once more ruling as an independent sovereign. So again Otto and his troops entered Italy. Berengar was deposed, and at Rome the Pope crowned Otto as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (961).

In our days, we have so many emperors that the word means to us little more than king; but in the times of which we are telling there could be only one Emperor, or at most two,—one in the far East and one in the West. Emperor meant "ruler of the world." In the Christian West, people felt that only the Pope at Rome could confer the title. It was therefore an exalted honor that was conferred upon Otto. Observe that he assumed the same title that Charlemagne had borne. Otto regarded himself simply as the legitimate inheritor of Charlemagne's throne and empire.

Really, however, it was a new empire that here came into existence. You must remember that there had been an interval of over sixty years since the death of the Emperor Arnulf, the last of the Carolingians to be crowned at Rome. During those sixty years there had been no one to claim the title. Moreover, this new empire had nothing like the extent or power of the old. Charlemagne had held actual sway over all Europe from mid-Spain to the unknown wilds of Russia. The new emperors actually ruled only in Germany, and not always over the whole of that. Consequently most historians regard the crowning of Otto as the beginning of a new and lesser empire, which, in distinction from the older and wider one, they call the German empire.

The fact that Otto was able, even in this lesser way, to assert his position above the other kings of Europe, led his people, and especially the flattering Italians, to call him in his turn, "Great." So it is as Otto the Great that he is known to history. Really it had been far better for him, and far better for his nation, had he been content to remain at home and set his own land in order. He had established an empire, and his successors wasted their best efforts, sacrificed their lives, and drained Germany of its strength for centuries, in the effort to maintain the shadowy honor. One German army after another overran Italy, deluged the land with measureless misery, and then disappeared, wasting away under the fevers of the unhealthy climate. Germany might have ruled all Europe, had not Italy become the grave of her growing power.

Otto, after his coronation, spent most of the remaining twelve years of his life warring in Italy, as his successors were to war, against rebellion, treachery, and pestilence, and leaving Germany, as his successors left it, to take care of itself. He was succeeded by his son, Otto II. (973-983). This Otto, the child of Adelheid, and hence himself half Italian, spent much of his life in the southern land, fighting with rebellious Italians or with the Greeks. He married a Greek princess; and thus his son, Otto II., was part Greek and part Italian, and very little of good, old, stalwart German.

Otto III. (983-1002) came to the throne when only three years old. At first his mother and his grandmother Adelheid ruled in his name; but when he was sixteen, he took everything into his own hands. His Greek mother had taught him to despise his Saxon blood; and he even used to sign himself in his royal proclamations "Greek by birth, Roman by right of rule." He was called the "wonder-child" because he was so highly educated and accomplished, because so much was expected of him, and because he boasted that he would accomplish so much. Poor visionary lad! he never accomplished anything. He was crushed by the mountainous weight of work before him. He hesitated where to begin.

Perhaps the approach of the year 1000 had not a little to do with his wavering state of mind. There was a belief, widespread throughout the Christian world, that this year 1000 was to mark the second coming of Christ, the end of the world. This fancy was not confined to the ignorant; nobles, priests, many of the highest rank everywhere, had thus misread the Scriptures. Numerous legal documents of the time began with the words, "As the world is now drawing to a close." In many places the peasants did not even plant their crops in the spring of the year 1000, so sure were they that there would never come a reaping time.

Otto made hurried pilgrimages from place to place. He did penance for fourteen days in an Italian sacred cavern. He broke open Charlemagne's tomb at Aix, and descending into it, stood face to face with the man whom he desired to take as a model. In truth, he seems to have been half insane, always beginning some great work, never finishing it, wandering feverishly from one end of his domain to another, clamoring to everybody to tell him where he should begin to be great like Charlemagne. Poor, feeble, over-weighted mortal, he never did begin! He died near Rome when only twenty-two.

He had planned to make Rome once more the capital of the world. He had abandoned German for Italian life. Yet the unthankful Italians were in rebellion around him at his death, and even attempted to seize upon his body. His loyal German troops surrounded the corpse, and literally hewed a path for it through overwhelming numbers back to Germany, where the "wonder-child" was buried at Aix in the land he had despised.

The chief who had thus valiantly brought back Otto's body succeeded him upon the throne. He was Henry II. (1002-1024), "the Pious" or "the Saint," the last of the Saxon emperors. In truth, he was scarcely a Saxon at all, except in the sense that he was the only surviving heir of the first Saxon king, Henry I. The grandfather of Henry II. had been that Henry, the younger brother of Otto the Great, who was pardoned after so many rebellions and made Duke of Bavaria. The family had thus been transplanted to Bavaria, and the father of this new emperor, and he himself, were both Bavarian born. Thus, though Henry II. is generally classed among the Saxon emperors, the Saxons did not regard him as one of themselves. They had come to feel that the emperors must be chosen from among them, and were much inclined to resent the election of a Bavarian. Henry, however, had secured Otto's imperial treasures, and he had little trouble in purchasing support. He was formally crowned at Aix in 1003.

The twenty-two years of Henry's reign were spent in a long and difficult struggle to rebuild the imperial power, which the two preceding emperors had allowed to decay. The dukes had regained the influence of which

Otto the Great had deprived them. Everything was practically in their hands, and their duchies were almost independent states. In opposition to them, Henry began building up the power of the clergy, a course which proved very successful in his own case. Its dangers developed only under his successors.

His support of the clergy was partly what won Henry II. the title of "the Saint"; though he was a good man in many ways, very generous and very religious. It is told of him that he desired to abandon his crown, and actually became a monk, entering a monastery and taking the vows. But the first vow put upon him was that of implicit obedience; and the abbot instantly took advantage of this to order him to reascend the throne,—where he was certainly more useful to the church and to mankind than in a monastery.

Henry and his wife Cunegunde were both made saints by the church, she having been accused of crime and undergone the ordeal by fire. This was the superstitious way of testing guilt in those still half-barbaric days. Having declared herself innocent of the charges against her, Cunegunde offered to walk barefoot over red-hot ploughshares. Had she been burned she would have been considered guilty; but she passed triumphantly through the ordeal, though how hot the iron blades really were, and how miraculous the performance, each of us must judge for himself.

Henry avoided Italy as much as possible. He recognized the mistake which all the Ottos had made, and he clung with loyal faith and affection to his German subjects. While in Italy in 1005, he was suddenly attacked in his castle at Pavia by a band of rebellious citizens, and only escaped by leaping from a high window. He was lamed for life by the fall, and naturally his antipathy against everything Italian was intensified. Indeed, he did not go to Rome to receive the imperial crown until 1014, and then only because he felt it was his duty to assert his authority in quelling the turbulence which was rampant there.

There were still wars all along the eastern frontier of Germany. The Slavonic races of Bohemians and Poles, and the Magyars in Hungary were slowly becoming Christianized, and were beginning to accept the authority of the empire. They were, however, under no effective control, and frequently reasserted their independence and desolated the German border, much as the Indians did in America during the colonial days.

Henry had also internal revolts to quell; but in the main he was a man of peace, and ruled by peaceful means. He left the empire much stronger than he had found it, but poverty-stricken through his generous way of giving to all who asked. Many churches and monasteries owe their origin to him, and one great cathedral which he built at Bamberg was his special pride. Here he was

buried in 1024. He had taken the monkish vow of chastity, and died childless, the Saxon line of emperors perishing with him.

This line had produced two able monarchs, Henry I. and Otto I., who raised Germany to great power, and did much to break down the old tribal distinctions. Then came the two feeble and youthful emperors, Otto II. and III., who lost all that had been gained. Next followed this thoughtful and pious Henry II., who partially restored the unity and strength of the nation.



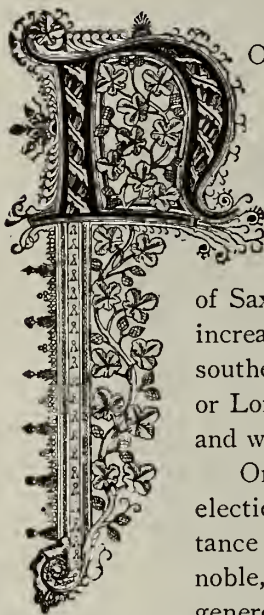
HENRY III. SETTLING THE PAPAL DISPUTE



PORTRAIT AND SIGNATURE OF CONRAD II.

Chapter LIV

THE FRANKISH EMPERORS AND THE STRUGGLE WITH THE POPES



O successor to Henry II. having been chosen during his lifetime, a great meeting was now held near Mainz on the Rhine, to elect a new king. There were present eight dukes, besides so many bishops, priests, lesser nobles, and free gentlemen that they numbered sixty thousand in all.

It is worth while noting that the four old duchies of Saxony, Franconia, Bavaria, and Swabia had gradually been increased to eight. The additions were Carinthia in the southeast, Bohemia in the east, and in the west Lotharingia, or Lorraine, which now belonged permanently to the Germans and was divided into Upper and Lower Lorraine.

Only the great nobles and churchmen really voted in the election; the others were there to give authority and importance to their chiefs. These selected as king a Frankish noble, Conrad, who was descended from Conrad I. So the generosity which the earlier Conrad had displayed in sacrificing the interests of his house to the Saxons, was now to some extent repaid by the restoration of his line. Indeed, it was mainly his lineage which led to this second Conrad's selection, for he was not one of the great dukes. The duchy of Franconia was held by his cousin, another Conrad, and his rival for the throne; but after the election, the Frankish duke became the new king's warmest supporter.

Conrad II. (1024-1039) was a fine, majestic-looking man, who tried to do justice to all; and his election was soon generally approved. He was the first German monarch thus elected who had not a duchy of his own to give him strength. Conrad began his reign upheld by nothing but the general good-will of his subjects. If you look back over all the rebellions we have recorded, you will realize that this was a most uncertain support; and Conrad must assuredly have been a man of unusual ability to succeed as he did. Early in his reign he went to Rome and was crowned emperor. He then announced that, since the titles and estates of the great dukes had been made hereditary, he would use his imperial authority to make the rights of the lesser nobles hereditary in the same way. The dukes could scarcely object, though they perhaps saw that this was a shrewd move to weaken their power, by making the lesser nobles as independent of the dukes, as the dukes were of the emperor. This course naturally brought Conrad into great favor with the class he had thus aided.

The kingdom of Burgundy, which included Switzerland and the Rhone valley in France, became part of the German empire in 1032. Its last king bequeathed it to Conrad, who seized and held it with the sword. His own stepson, Ernest, Duke of Swabia, claimed to have a better right to Burgundy, and attempted a rebellion against the emperor. Then was revealed the strength of Conrad's hold upon the lesser nobility, the fighting men of the land. The vassals of Ernest refused with one accord to follow him in his revolt. They said they had indeed taken an oath of allegiance to him, but both he and they had taken another and higher oath to support the emperor.

Ernest, thus rendered powerless, was imprisoned by his triumphant stepfather. The fate of this hapless young duke of Swabia was long a favorite theme with the poets and story-tellers of German legend. Conrad is said to have offered him his freedom if he would betray a friend, Count Werner of Kyberg, who had helped him in rebellion. Young Ernest scornfully refused. He managed to escape from the court and fled to Count Werner. Together the comrades plunged into the vast Black Forest and defied pursuit. Gathering a band of outlaws like themselves, they became the Robin Hoods of Germany. A gloomy and deep-hidden tower was their stronghold, and from this they levied forced contributions on all the country round. Unfortunately, while like Robin Hood they plundered the strong, they neglected to pursue his excellent policy of sparing the weak, and finally the peasantry of the district, banding together against their exactions, waylaid and slew them.

The general sympathy roused for young Ernest by his bravery, loyalty, wild life, and tragic fate have combined with the harshness of the Emperor, his stepfather, to raise him to the rank of a hero of romance. The very peasants to whom he owed his death may have magnified his exploits to enhance their

own victory; for it was around peasants' firesides that his story was first told. From there it spread, expanded out of all semblance to the truth, until he has become the favorite outlaw chief of German legend.

As the Emperor Conrad grew old, he had his son Henry declared King of Germany. So when the father died, Henry succeeded to the throne without difficulty as Henry III. (1039-1056). He was the most powerful emperor of the Franconian line. The authority which Conrad had slowly and painfully built up, Henry inherited and increased.

At the time of Henry's accession, the general condition of the populace in Germany was so bad that it is impossible fairly to describe it. The land had not yet recovered from the neglect caused by the expected ending of the world in the year 1000. Famine had long haunted the steps of the poorer peasantry. Then there came three years with such heavy rains that the crops rotted in the ground, and we are reliably assured that starving men slew their fellows to feed upon the bodies. None but an armed force dared travel through the land. All sorts of robbery went unpunished. The nobility had long claimed and exercised the right of private war. That is to say, each noble occupied a strong castle, built rather as a fort than a house. From this the chieftain sallied at the head of his men to attack any other noble who had offended him. Not even the Emperor could stop such an expedition; it was engaged in asserting the noble's "right of private war." If by accident the troops slew a few peasants instead, or stormed and sacked a feebly defended town, there was no one to reprove their master for such little mistakes.

It was Odilo, the abbot of the monastery of Cluny in Burgundy, who first brought about an improvement in this terrible state of affairs. He and his monks began to preach what was called the "Truce of God." This peculiar institution was adopted first in France, and afterward in Germany. It commanded that all private war should be suspended every Thursday out of reverence for the approach of God's day, Sunday. The strife must not be again resumed until the following Monday. This, you will see, left the nobles only three days in each week for fighting. They had resisted all attempts to forbid their wars, but to this half-measure they gradually agreed. In 1043 Henry III. proclaimed the "Truce of God" as a law throughout his dominions. He did many other wise things to relieve the miserable peasantry, and gradually their condition improved.

Henry also undertook to reform the church. He and his predecessors had appointed many bishops and abbots for political reasons. Sometimes the wealthy church places had been openly sold for money. Henry put a stop to all this, turned out as many of the evil prelates as he could, and appointed holy ones in their stead. Gradually he worked his way up to the very top of the

church, and then resolved to reform the papacy itself. You have read in the story of Rome how he deposed the quarrelling popes and appointed a German one instead, bringing the deposed prelates back to Germany with him as prisoners. Two of Henry's popes died; but the third selected by him was his cousin Bruno, the justly celebrated Leo IX.

Henry, Leo IX., and the reforming monks of Cluny worked together and really managed to do a great deal of good for the world. There was a vast improvement in the state of the church, as well as in that of the people. Only the nobility were dissatisfied. Henry's reforms, his aggressive strength and imperial will were gradually reducing the nobles' importance, encroaching on their sacred privileges. There was very little rebellion, but only because the Emperor stood, as one of his friends described him, "sword in hand before his throne, ready to strike down every foe."

The King of France, Henry or Henri I., took advantage of the Emperor's troubles to try to wrest from him both Burgundy and Lorraine. After some skirmishing, an amicable meeting was arranged between the two monarchs at Ivois in 1056. The German Henry became so enraged at the evasions of his enemy that he snatched off his glove and threw it at the Frenchman's feet, defying him in the lofty style of knighthood to a personal combat. Henry of France refused the challenge, and the next night slipped away with his army back to safety in his own country. He gave the Emperor no further trouble.

Henry III. was not yet forty when he died. Never was the empire in greater need of a stalwart guide and defender, and his loss was sorely felt. He had received the promise of the nobles that his son should succeed him on the throne. That son was a child, not yet six years old.

You must see by this time that the story of mediæval Germany was a pitiful repetition of the same tragic tale. The imperial power, the one force that wrought for peace and unity in Germany, was being continually built up by one, two, or three capable emperors. Then, just as the land began to enjoy the fruits of their labor, the throne passed to a child or a feeble youth, and everything went tumultuously back into the old evil ways.

The child who now came to the throne was Henry IV. (1056-1105). His mother, the Empress Agnes, was appointed to govern for him during his childhood. She was one of those saintly Christian women whose lives and characters contrast so strikingly with the general fierceness and brutality of the age. The policy of the preceding warrior emperors had been to encourage the townspeople and lesser gentry, relying on them for support, while weakening and defying the great dukes. This vigorous and warlike course was impossible to the gentle nature of Agnes. She sought to win the friendship of the higher nobles. With this in view, she pardoned their outbreaks again and again. She

even gave new provinces and appointed to higher offices the hereditary enemies of her house, the lords who had been most open in defiance of her husband. He had crushed them; she restored them to their former power. So far was this spirit of conciliation or timidity carried that one nobleman, Count Rudolf, dared to seize by force Matilda, the young daughter of the Empress. Instead of sending an army to punish him, the mother pardoned him, wedded him to Matilda, and created him Duke of Swabia.

The gentle policy of Agnes failed in almost every case to have the happy effects she hoped. Instead of being grateful, the nobles only despised what they considered her folly and weakness. The power she conferred was everywhere turned against her, and against her son. Rudolf of Swabia became young Henry's most dangerous and most ambitious enemy.

Unfortunate little Henry! Even his mother's weak but loving guidance was soon taken from him. When he was twelve years old, Agnes and he were spending the Easter season at the beautiful island of Kaiserswerth on the Rhine, where they were visited by several nobles. The gorgeously decorated ship of the visitors lay out in the stream, and Henry, boy-like, stepped into a boat with two of his entertainers to get a nearer view of the wonder. It was the opportunity the lords had been plotting for, and they promptly sailed away with their young king. Henry, realizing that he was being abducted, threw himself boldly into the water to swim ashore, but one of his captors leaped after him and bore the struggling lad back into captivity.

The unhappy Empress stood on the bank weeping and wringing her hands, and entreating them to give back her child. Her attendants shouted helplessly, and ran in aimless fashion along the shore. But her boy was gone. The broken-hearted mother could endure no further. She saw for herself that the qualities needed for the control of this rude world had not been given her. Even her mother-love seemed useless now, and abandoning the effort to regain Henry she retired to Rome, resigned all her imperial dignities, and became a nun.

The instigator of this successful abduction was Hanno, the powerful Archbishop of Cologne. Hanno assumed the guardianship of the boy king, and governed in his name. He treated Henry with such harshness and severity that all the lad learned under his government was to hate his master with a vehemence, childish sometimes in its expression, but dangerous nevertheless.

Another and far more crafty Archbishop, Adalbert of Bremen, seeing how matters stood, managed to get both Henry and the regency away from Hanno. Adalbert then followed a directly opposite course with his young charge. Whereas Hanno had been over-severe, Adalbert abandoned all restraint and discipline. The boy received no good training whatever, and every temptation

to idleness and folly was thrust in his way. Adalbert's court was poisoned with wickedness, and the impressionable lad was taught to revel in vice. The inevitable consequence followed: Henry became infatuated with his guardian—and ruined for life.

It is idle to speculate as to what sort of king Henry might have made with a different childhood. He seems to have had good instincts, personal courage, and a generous heart; but he lacked the strength of mind to resist the evil influences which wrecked his youth. He grew into one of the worst kings that have misgoverned unhappy Germany.

When he was still only fifteen, a coronation ceremony was held, and the assembled nobles declared him fitted to rule for himself. The boy promptly proved their folly and his own by drawing the imperial sword, with which they had girt him, and flourishing it in the face of Archbishop Hanno, still by far the most powerful man in the realm. Henry then placed all authority in Adalbert's hands, and abandoned himself once more to the life of luxurious pleasure and sloth he had learned to enjoy.

His favorite palace was at Goslar on the borders of Saxony. He had been taught by Adalbert to despise the Saxons for their rudeness, and to hate them as the hereditary enemies of his Frankish house. As a result he treated them so harshly and offensively that they rose in rebellion. Hanno was already his enemy. The better people everywhere in Germany were disgusted with the king's evil life. His mother had placed his enemies in the great dukedoms. Before he was twenty the young monarch stood almost alone in Germany.

A party headed by Hanno attempted to reform him by force. They drove away Adalbert and compelled Henry to wed a wife they selected for him, Bertha, the daughter of an Italian noble. Bertha loved her handsome, wayward husband, and became the one true friend who never failed or deserted him. But the young king had at first only hatred for this unwelcome wife. He sought to divorce her, and there are sad and painful tales of the brutality and treachery with which he met her noble loyalty.

Meanwhile, the quarrel between the king and the oppressed and insulted Saxons grew more and more bitter, until Henry was at last hunted from his castle, and driven to wander for days a solitary fugitive among the mountains. By great exertion he raised an army with which he returned and avenged himself on the Saxons, defeating them in a merciless battle. The Saxon nobles fled, abandoning the poor peasantry, who, unable to escape, were cut down by thousands. For a moment Henry's power seemed re-established; but the Saxons appealed for protection to the Pope,—and thus steps into the story Gregory VII., the greatest of the rulers of the Church.

You have already learned in Rome's story of what Gregory did. He sum-

moned Henry to appear before him and explain the charges. Henry, still a boy in mind and unable to realize his danger, was furious at what he considered the insolence shown by a dependent of his empire. He summoned a council at Worms, declared Gregory deposed, and sent him a message vowing to drag him from his papal chair, as Henry III., his father, had dragged former popes. The fact that his father had been in the right, and that he was in the wrong, does not seem to have occurred to the young Emperor as an altering factor in the case. It proved the decisive one. Gregory excommunicated the rash youth. Henry's subjects were only too ready to accept this as a reason for abandoning him. Every one dropped away from his side, and a national meeting was called to depose him and elect a successor.

At last Henry realized that he was not, as he had been taught, the greatest personage in the world, free to act as he chose, and all-powerful in everything. This period must be considered the turning point of his life, the beginning of his belated manhood. Before the assembly gathered, he made his famous journey to Italy and submitted himself to Gregory at Canossa.

The rebellious Germans even tried to prevent his going. His passage over the Alps was like the flight of a hunted exile. Bertha accompanied him with their little child and a few serving-men headed by a single knight. It was mid-winter, and a year unusually severe. The mountain passes were difficult and dangerous. The fugitives had a sled for Bertha and the child, while the rest made their way on foot, amid the snowdrifts and threatening avalanches.

From the moment Henry set foot in Italy his fortunes turned. The Italians, being themselves at enmity with the Pope, welcomed Henry gladly as their Emperor. The pardon which he won from Gregory deprived the Germans of their excuse for rebellion, and led many of the better class to return honestly to their allegiance. Still, his more determined enemies persisted in declaring him deposed, and they elected Duke Rudolf of Swabia to succeed him. Rudolf, the same who had stolen and wedded Henry's sister Matilda, accepted the election, and once more civil war devastated the empire.

Henry found his main support among the free cities, which were now becoming an important element in the strength of the nation. You will remember that Henry I. had founded them, all the emperors had encouraged them, and Henry III. had confirmed and added to their privileges. The great dukes despised the citizens, robbed them, and trampled on their rights wherever possible. Thus the whole life and strength of the cities was intertwined with that of the emperors; each rose and fell with the other. Naturally, therefore, the cities supported Henry.

He conducted the war with ability and success. Sometimes his chances looked dark; but at last, in 1080, he settled the contest by defeating Rudolf

near that same old battle ground of Merseburg. Rudolf's right hand was cut off in the struggle, and as he lay dying the next day he cried, "God has punished me rightly. It was with that hand I swore allegiance to Henry."

Now came the Emperor's turn for revenge upon the Pope. Henry led an army into Italy (1081), besieged Rome three years, captured it, was crowned Emperor by a Pope of his own making, and drove Gregory into the exile in which he died. The next few years form Henry's period of power. Germany was at peace under his foot, and tradition tells us, somewhat doubtfully, that he became a model king, watching over the interests of his people, and doing justice to all.

His struggle with the Church still continued. The popes who succeeded Gregory adopted his policy and continued to preach against the Emperor. His excommunication was renewed. The real question at issue was as to whether Pope or Emperor should appoint the German bishops. The right and wrong of this matter are still in dispute, it is a burning question in Germany even to-day; nor can it be settled merely by inquiring how the appointments were originally made. You will remember that Henry II., "the Saint," had made his bishops very powerful, hoping to be defended by them against the dukes. The churchmen had now grown so strong that bishops like Hanno and Adalbert contended for control of the empire. Half the land of Germany is said to have lain in priestly hands.

It is true that some of the emperors had been very careless as to the character of the men they made bishops, thereby bringing great harm and shame to the Church. Henry IV. was particularly blamable in this respect. He had sometimes sold the bishoprics openly to whoever would pay the most for them, and sometimes he had appointed his own wicked and despicable favorites to the high and sacred office. Still, if the claim now advanced by the Church were allowed, and the bishops were appointed solely by the Pope, they would thus become entirely independent of the Emperor. The rule over half the empire would pass from its master to the Italian Pope. The power of the emperors, already waning, would disappear entirely. Henry IV. saw the danger plainly, and even in the time of his greatest need steadily refused to resign this power of appointment.

The Crusades, which began in Henry's reign about the year 1096, added vastly to the power of the popes. The whole story of the Crusades fits in more readily with that of France, and will be told you there. They were, however, regarded as holy wars; and the religious spirit roused by them did much to widen the gap between Henry and his subjects. In the far-off Holy Land, many of Germany's best and bravest were sacrificing life and fortune fighting for the Church; while at home in their native land, their Emperor was warring against that Church's head.

There is no question that in his later years Henry grew to feel keenly this isolation. The punishment brought upon him by his early life was heavy indeed. Even his own family turned against him. His older son, Conrad, declared that he could no longer imperil his own soul by supporting his excommunicated father. He raised a rebellion; Henry crushed it, and Conrad died in prison.

Then came the turn of the Emperor's younger son, another Henry, the centre of all his father's hopes, the child born after the Emperor had learned truly to love his devoted wife. But this young Henry was cold and crafty and treacherous, a cunning liar, a shrewd dissembler. He did not rebel until he was sure of the support of both dukes and bishops. Then he raised an army, and when the Emperor marshalled the imperial troops against him, the leaders of the royal forces suddenly deserted the father for the son. Henry IV. was compelled to flee; but his old friends, the cities, rallied to his support and enabled him to renew the contest.

Once more the younger Henry substituted treachery for force. A meeting was arranged between father and son, and the heartbroken old Emperor threw himself at his boy's feet crying, "My son, my son, let God punish me for my sins! Stain not thy honor by presuming to judge me!" The younger man pretended deep remorse, and took advantage of the reconciliation that followed to seize and imprison his father.

The Emperor was commanded to abdicate and surrender the crown jewels. He refused, and dressing himself in the regal robes, with the diadem of Charlemagne upon his head, and the sceptre in his hand, he majestically defied his jailors to touch the person of the Emperor of the world. It was a pathetic shadow of his old, childish belief in his sacred right and indestructible authority. The jewels were torn from him with scornful force, and he was compelled by threats to sign his own abdication (1105). He was then released, but retained within reach of his captors, and so poorly cared for that he begged to be allowed to earn his own living by working in the cathedral of Spire. His prayer was refused, and there is a story that tells of his even having to sell his boots for bread.

Meanwhile, his friends continued fighting in his name, and at last he escaped and joined their forces, but died the next year (1106). His last act was to send his sword and signet ring to his wicked son, in token that he forgave and still loved him.

The reign of the rebellious son, Henry V. (1105-1125), fitly closes the miserable tragedy of his race. He was the last of his line, the last of the Frankish emperors. The same qualities that had won him the throne enabled him to retain it. Cold and cunning, strong and savage, he managed to hold and even

to increase his power in the face of all his enemies. He had defied his father in the name of the Church; but after that father's death the son also refused to grant the Pope's claim in the matter of appointing bishops, so the strife went on. Gradually the war became one of Frank against Saxon; and at last some partial concessions to the Pope brought a temporary peace in 1122.

Henry's life was unloved and childless; his death, in 1125, was unregretted, and men have pointed to these things as his punishment,—whether they condemned him for his sins against his father, or for his wars against the Pope.

When Henry V. died, another imperial election became necessary. The chief of his party was his nephew Frederick, Duke of Swabia, who hoped to succeed him. But all the influence of the Church was thrown in favor of Henry's bitterest enemy,—the Pope's strongest supporter,—Lothair, Duke of Saxony. The Saxon was elected as Lothair III. (1125–1137). He immediately surrendered all claim to appoint the bishops, or control their lands. When he was crowned Emperor at Rome, he knelt humbly at the Pope's feet, accepted the empire as a papal gift, and swore to govern it as a vassal of the Church. The first period of the papal wars was at an end, and the victory of the popes complete.

The Frankish dynasty had thus supplied four emperors whose combined reigns cover just a century (1024–1125). The first two sovereigns of this line, Conrad II. and Henry III., built up the strength of the cities, greatly increased the imperial power, and dominated the Church. Then came the child, Henry IV., and the folly of his early reign destroyed his authority utterly, and built up that of the great nobles and the Popes. During his later years Henry IV. partly regained his ascendancy, and both he and his son, Henry V., clung tenaciously to what they considered their rights, through long and bitter civil wars. Then came the Saxon, Lothair, who sought peace with the Church, and thus managed to restore something of peace to distracted Germany, and something of respect and dignity to the imperial office.



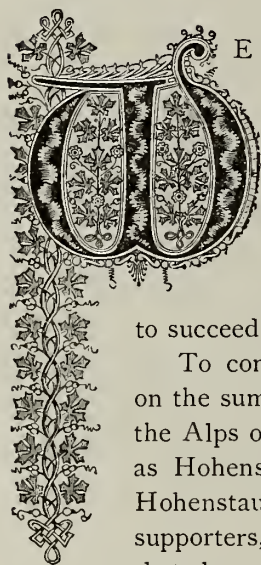
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THE TOURNAMENT OF BARBAROSSA AT MAINZ

Chapter LV

THE SWABIAN EMPERORS AND FREDERICK BARBAROSSA



COME now to the famous line of Swabian emperors, the Hohenstaufens. Let us therefore turn back for a moment to trace the rise of this remarkable family. You will remember that when Henry IV. journeyed over the winter Alps to Canossa, he was escorted by one loyal knight. This knight was called Frederick of Buren. In reward for many faithful services he was given the Emperor's daughter as a wife, and appointed to succeed the rebellious Rudolf as Duke of Swabia.

To command his new domain, he built himself a strong castle on the summit of a steep volcanic hill, just where the highlands of the Alps open out into the plains of Germany. The hill was known as Hohenstaufen, and the castle-builder thus became Frederick of Hohenstaufen. He proved the ablest and staunchest of Henry's supporters, and it was not until after Frederick's death in 1104, that the nobles and bishops dared start their revolt against the king under the leadership of the unfilial young Henry V.

Frederick of Hohenstaufen left two sons. The elder was the Frederick, Duke of Swabia, who disputed the crown with Lothair of Saxony. Lothair, after his election, determined to break the power of his dangerous rival, and civil war desolated Swabia. Frederick's younger brother, Conrad, was away upon a crusade. When he returned, he went to his brother's assistance, and at last Lothair was compelled to grant them terms of honorable peace. Conrad became recognized as the ablest general of the day; he was made standard bearer of the imperial army.

Lothair had no son of his own, so he planned to leave the empire to his son-in-law, Henry the Proud, Duke of Bavaria. With this object he made Henry also Duke of Saxony, and when dying, sent him the famous crown jewels and all the insignia of sovereignty. The Church had also been supporting Henry, and his election seemed assured. But his very power led to his defeat. The Pope distrusted him, the nobles feared him. He was not called Henry the Proud for nothing, and they had no desire to place themselves within the grasp of a man whose strength already so far exceeded their own. Three months before the appointed public election, many of the nobles and bishops met in secret; and, choosing the only man that could stand against Henry, elected Conrad of Hohenstaufen to be their Emperor, as Conrad III. (1138-1152).

It was a trick, and of course it meant a civil war with Henry. He seems at first to have sought peace. He acknowledged Conrad's authority and surrendered the crown jewels; but his tone grew insolent and menacing. Conrad attempted to deprive him of one of his two duchies, and he rebelled. Then began the long wars of Guelph and Ghibelline, of which you have already heard in Italy. The German forms of the words are *Welf* and *Waibling*. *Welf* was the name of Henry's family; and the Hohenstaufens, particularly Conrad, were known as the Waiblings, from the Swabian town of Waiblingen, whence they sprang. The two names became the war-cries of the contending factions.

Henry himself maintained the war in Saxony. In his other duchy, Bavaria, he entrusted the command to his brother, Count Welf. The well-known story of the women of Weinsberg belongs to this Bavarian portion of the war. The Emperor Conrad besieged Count Welf in Weinsberg, and met with such sturdy resistance that he vowed in his anger to slay every man in the place. At last the heroic defenders were exhausted and begged for mercy. Conrad gave only the ominous answer that all women might leave the town unharmed. When the Welf leaders pleaded that the women should not be driven empty-handed into the world, he relented so far as to say that each might carry away what she could of her belongings upon her back. The next morning, a strange procession filed out of the doomed town. First came the Countess Welf, bearing on her back her burly warrior husband; and each woman in the long, staggering line bent in similar manner beneath the weight of husband, son, or sweetheart. Conrad's followers were angry at the trick and would have slain their foes as they came; but the Emperor was touched by the devotion of the women, and declared that his word should not be broken. Historically it is perhaps uncertain whether Count Welf and his wife were really in Weinsberg at the time, but the main part of the pretty story is undisputed fact, and to this day, the Bavarians say, when a man chooses a specially sturdy and hearty wife, "he thinks of the women of Weinsberg."

Henry the Proud died, but his courageous wife carried on his war against the Emperor, in the name of her ten-year-old son, Henry, afterward known as Henry the Lion. Finally, peace was agreed upon, the young heir of the Welfs surrendering Bavaria, but keeping Saxony.

This compromise was really arranged by St. Bernard, a wonderful preacher, who was drawing all Europe into another crusade. Even the Emperor Conrad joined the crusaders and marched for the second time to the Holy Land. Conrad added much to his own personal fame as a fighter; but the crusade was a failure, and scarce a thousand out of his great German army returned with him to Germany. In one respect this disaster was a gain to the land, for the crusaders were largely turbulent nobles, and their death left other people in comparative peace.

It was Conrad who introduced the double-headed eagle into the coat of arms of the German Empire. He saw it on the shields of the Emperors of the East, at Constantinople, where the two heads were used in remembrance of the double empire which Constantinople had once held over both East and West. Conrad thought that he had now a better right to the double eagle than these feeble Eastern Emperors, and he placed it in the arms of his country. His people said it meant that they were victorious on both sides, against the Slavs to the east, and the Romans, that is the French and Italians, to the west.

When Conrad died, he left a little son as his heir, but the Germans had at last learned something from their bitter experiences, and refused to make the boy Emperor. Indeed it seems that Conrad himself counselled them to pass his son by, and give the crown to another member of his family, a young man of thirty, who had already won distinction as a general and a crusader. This was Frederick the Red-beard, Duke of Swabia, Conrad's nephew. So Frederick was unanimously chosen.

Frederick I. (1152-1190), or Barbarossa (Red-beard), as he is better known, was a man not only of remarkable ability, but of winning manner and majestic mien. Of him people truly felt that he was born to be a king. He became one of Germany's most famous emperors, ranking with Charlemagne and Henry the City-builder and Otto the Great. Conrad had been building up a strong government, which Barbarossa inherited and improved.

The strife between Welf and Waibling had broken out again, but for a time it seemed that their wars would be permanently ended by Frederick's election. He and Henry the Lion were cousins and warm personal friends. One of Frederick's first acts was to arrange for giving back Bavaria to Henry, thus restoring to the Welf chieftain the former power of his family. For a time all went well; Henry devoted himself to extending his rule over the

Sclavs along the Baltic Sea. He built cities on the conquered lands, made Lubeck a great commercial centre, and proved himself an able ruler.

When Frederick went to be crowned Emperor at Rome, Henry was his chief supporter. Frederick was by no means so ready to submit to the Pope as his immediate predecessors had been, and there was much friction before he was crowned. Finally the Romans broke into open insurrection against this new Emperor; there was savage fighting, and over a thousand of the citizens were slain in the streets. Frederick himself was unhorsed in the confusion; and only the courageous defence of his friend, Henry, saved his life from the mob.

A glimpse at one of Frederick's early court assemblages will show you the real power he held, and his position at the head of all the princes of Europe. The red-bearded Emperor sits upon the golden throne of Charlemagne, in the great hall of one of his many palaces. Dukes, bishops, and lesser nobles beyond numbering, are ranged around him. The massive doors are thrown open, there is a ringing flourish of trumpets, and one suppliant enters after another. First, perhaps, comes a deputation from some little city, complaining of the depredations of a neighboring knight, secure against their vengeance in his high stone castle. As the Emperor listens to their woes, his blue eyes begin to burn, till at length he gives a sharp word of command, a body of imperial troops rides jangling forth, and soon there is one robber stronghold less in the land.

Next it may be the ambassadors of Denmark, who enter to entreat the Emperor to decide between two claimants to the Danish throne, either of whom will hold his crown as a vassal of the Emperor. Then comes a messenger from the English king, Henry II., with a letter saying: "England and all else that belongs to us, we here offer to thee, that everything may be ordered according to thy wish. Let there be between our nations concord, union, and amicable relations, but in such a way that thou, as the greater, may retain the right to command; and on our side shall not be wanting the will to obey."

Perhaps it is the gorgeous ambassadors of an Asian sultan who appear next, asking a princess of the imperial line for their master's bride, and offering from him his acceptance of the Christian faith. Then comes the King of Hungary to renew his oath of vassalage, or perhaps the defeated King of Poland, bare-foot, his sword tied round his neck in sign of submission, presents his tribute of five hundred pounds of silver. Then it is the turn of the Duke of Bohemia, who entreats that like these, his neighbors, he be given the title of King, which none but the Emperor can bestow.

At one of these assemblages originated the romance of Frederick's life. There came a messenger in hot haste from Burgundy. Its countess, Beatrice,

had been seized and imprisoned by her uncle, and robbed of her rights. Would not her Emperor save her? The Emperor would and did, with an army at his back; and when the poor released princess knelt before him with thanks, he saw how fair and queenly she was. An Emperor's wooing, they say, is short in doing. Beatrice became Frederick's bride, his devoted wife, and the mother of his five sturdy sons.

At another royal assembly in 1157 at Besançon, an Italian cardinal asserted that the empire was a papal fief, held, as Lothair had held it, by gift from the Pope. It required the personal interference of the Emperor to save that cardinal's life from the angry nobles. So the fatal strife with the Popes, which had destroyed the Frankish line of emperors, opened again. The rich and powerful Italian cities leagued with the Pope; and thus began Frederick's long Italian wars, of which you have read in Rome's story. Even on Barbarossa's first trip to Rome, the Italians had done all they could to destroy his army by underhand means. Once on his return march toward Germany, huge rafts of logs swept suddenly down a swift river against a bridge he had to cross. Luckily, however, the bridge held until all his troops were safely over. A force of Italians held the roads through the Alps against him, and for a time made the homeward passage impossible by rolling down huge rocks.

There seemed no way to dislodge the foe, and disease and death were threatening the weary army on the plains behind. Otto of Wittelsbach, the knight who had led the attack on the arrogant cardinal at Besançon, and whom the Emperor had appointed imperial standard bearer, made himself famous by scaling the precipitous heights. Where even the mountain goats could scarce find footing, Otto and a band of chosen followers climbed, until they stood above their enemies, drove some to flight, and captured the rest, who were hanged as rebels.

There is no need to repeat to you again the long and miserable story of this unfortunate strife. Frederick led army after army into Italy to waste away in battle and pestilence. Milan, the leading city in the struggle, was destroyed and rebuilt. The warfare ended with the treaty of Constance in 1183. Frederick was nominally successful in that the cities acknowledged his authority, though they were really free and retained all practical power in their own hands.

The lowest ebb of Frederick's fortunes came in these wars at the battle of Lignano, 1176. He had called Henry the Lion to Italy to help him, but Henry tried to make conditions, and win concessions from his sovereign's need. Among the Italians the strife had become one of Welf against Waibling, and the great Welf leader was naturally unwilling to fight against his own faction. Frederick threw himself on his knees before his mighty vassal and besought

aid. Henry, torn by conflicting emotions, remembering their early friendship, remembering all the Emperor had done for him, wavered; but at last turned resolutely away in refusal.

His Welf followers were wild with exultation. "The crown you now see at your feet," said one, "you will soon see on your head." Frederick's faithful wife, Beatrice, raised him from his knees. "God will help you," she said, "and at some future day things will change. Then we will remember the insolence of this Welf."

Henry withdrew his forces, and the Emperor's weakened army was terribly defeated at Lignano. The imperial standard was captured; Frederick was hurled from his charger, and disappeared beneath the feet of the contending forces. His fleeing followers declared him dead, and the Empress and all the court put on mourning for him. Three days later he reappeared among them, resolute and persistent as ever.

He returned to Germany, and proclaimed the ban of the empire against Henry, that is he declared him outlawed and his possessions forfeited. Bavaria was given to the faithful standard bearer, Otto of Wittelsbach; Saxony to another noble. Henry resisted for two years, but was at last overcome. He came in his turn, even as Beatrice had predicted, to kneel a suppliant at the Emperor's feet. Frederick bethought himself of the old boyish days together and, forgiving Henry, restored to him a small portion of his possessions. This smaller duchy, Henry, with his old ability, proceeded to make happy and prosperous. But his power was gone, and the wars of Welf and Waibling at an end in Germany, though in Italy Guelph and Ghibelline continued the strife for centuries. The present royal house of England is descended from these Welfs, and from Henry the Lion.

When Frederick was nearly seventy years old, he held a last splendid tournament at Mainz, the greatest that chivalry had known. Europe was soon after roused to another crusade; and the aged Emperor, who had regained all his former importance, led the crusaders in person. The skill and energy with which he conducted the dangerous expedition enhanced even his high repute. But while his troops were crossing an Asian river, that came swift and cold from the mountains, Frederick, impatient of waiting for the boats, dashed his horse into the stream to swim to the other bank. The chill current swept down horse and rider, and the Emperor was drowned (1190). His body, recovered by his followers after long search, was buried in the Asian city of Antioch.

The glory of the empire died with Frederick Barbarossa. No succeeding Emperor held anything approaching his power or his authority over the other European states. It was this fact, combined perhaps with his burial in a foreign land, which led to his becoming such a centre of legends among his people. In

Germany, they refused to believe that he was dead and kept watching for him to return home, to appear again among them as he had after his overthrow at Lignano. They say that he is still living, deep in a magic cave beneath the Kyfhauser mountain in Thuringia. Here he sits asleep before a stone table, through which his long beard has slowly grown to the ground beneath. Ravens are forever flying around the mountain, and when the last of them disappears, the mighty Barbarossa will wake, and come forth to restore to Germany the peace and power which it once enjoyed under his majestic rule.



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